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CIA FILES COMPLAINT OVER ABC NEWS REPORT
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The CIA complained Wednesday to the Federal Communications Commission that ABC News violated the fairness doctrine with two reports alleging a spy agency plot to kill Honolulu investment counselor Ronald Rewald.

In a statement, the CIA said it had filed a complaint charging that ABC "deliberately distorted the news and violated the fairness doctrine" in its two-part report on alleged CIA involvement in Rewald's failed investment firm.

The complaint was filed after ABC News agreed to air what it called a clarification of the reports aired Sept. 19-20, the CIA statement said.

The network's clarification, read Wednesday night by anchorman Peter Jennings on "World News Tonight" said ABC News has "no reason to doubt the CIA's denial" that it directed a man named Scott Barnes to kill Rewald.

Barnes, who made the allegations during the broadcasts, said he got a job as a guard in a Honolulu jail where Rewald was being held on fraud charges.

Barnes told ABC that his CIA contact told him that "we've got to take him (Rewald) out... You know, kill him." Barnes said he refused the assignment.

A week after the reports were aired, the CIA, in a rare public statement, issued a denial of allegations contained in the broadcasts.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said the FCC complaint was filed to obtain a broader retraction of the news reports.

Besides the assassination allegation, ABC reported Rewald's allegations that his company engaged in many activities for the CIA, including help to arrange "secret arms shipments to countries like Syria, India and Taiwan."

The CIA has acknowledged that it used Rewald's firm, Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham and Wong, as a mail drop, but has denied involvement in the creation of the company or handling investors' funds.

In Wednesday's statement, the CIA said it filed the complaint "only after careful consideration and after several requests to have ABC correct its error," the agency's statement said. "Today ABC informed CIA that it would air a short statement accepting CIA's denial of one of the charges of attempted assassination, but has refused to address any other aspect of their broadcast.

"CIA has requested that the FCC conduct an appropriate inquiry, making findings on all the issues, and determine what corrective actions be taken by ABC," the agency said.

"We will have no comment until we've had a chance to review the complaint," said Tom Goodman, a spokesman for ABC News.

In its clarification, the network said that after the CIA disputed the assassination allegations "we asked Barnes for further evidence to support his charge. He was unable to provide it.

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